

Message Text

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21

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R 290605Z MAY 75

FM AMCONSUL ISTANBUL

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6077

INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA

AMCONSUL IZMIR

AMCONSUL ADANA

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E.O. 11652: NA

TAGS: PINT, TU

SUBJ: REPUBLICAN PEOPLE'S PARTY GAINS LEFTIST UNION CONFEDERATION
SUPPORT

REF: (A) ISTANBUL 1591; (B) ISTANBUL A-11

1. DESPITE REPORTED OBJECTIONS OF MANY DELEGATES, CONFEDERATION OF REVOLUTIONARY TRADE UNIONS (DISK) CONCLUDED ITS FIFTH GENERAL CONGRESS MAY 21 BY GIVING ITS OFFICIAL ENDORSEMENT TO THE REPUBLICAN PEOPLE'S PARTY (RPP). ALTHOUGH CONGRESS OPENED IN ORDERLY FASHION, DISCORD AROSE WHEN BURHAN SAHIN, HEAD OF BASIN IS PRESS UNION AND FOUNDER OF TURKISH SOCIALIST WORKERS' PARTY (TSWP) CHALLENGED LEADERSHIP OF DISK PRESIDENT KEMAL TURKLER AND CALLED FOR DISK SUPPORT OF TSWP. CONGRESS THEN MOVED TO CLOSED SESSION WHERE AFTER MUCH DEBATE TURKLER'S PROPOSAL TO ENDORSE RPP PASSED BY NARROW MARGIN.

2. COMMENT: DISK'S OFFICIAL ENDORSEMENT OF THE REPUBLICAN PEOPLE'S PARTY IS THE FRUIT OF ACTIVE LOBBYING BY THE RPP (REF A) AND CAREFUL CALCULATION BY DISK AS TO HOW ITS OWN POLITICAL INTERESTS CAN BE SERVED. AS DISK HAS GROWN, IT HAS

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BEEN UNDER PRESSURE FROM MEMBER UNIONS TO PURSUE A SOCIALIST

POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY CONSIDERABLY TO THE LEFT OF THE RPP, SUCH AS THE MARXIST IDEOLOGY OF THE TSWP AND BEHICE BOHAN'S RECONSTITUTED TURKISH LABOR PARTY (TLP). THE DISK LEADERSHIP, HOWEVER, HAS BEEN PUTTING PRACTICAL POLITICS AHEAD OF IDEOLOGY. AS FORMER DISK GENERAL SECRETARY KEMAL SULKER TOLD US IN MARCH (REF B), DISK SEES NO POINT IN SUPPORTING PARTIES WITH LITTLE OR NO PARLIAMENTARY REPRESENTATION, WHILE RPP, ALTHOUGH NOT A SOCIALIST PARTY IS AT LEAST A QTE BRIDGE TO SOCIALISM QTE. THUS THE CONGRESS' DECISION REPRESENTS AT LEAST A TEMPORARY VICTORY FOR THE MORE MODERATE ELEMENTS OF THE LEFT-OF-CENTER CONFEDERATION, AND IN A FUTURE ELECTION MAY HELP GIVE THE RPP SOME VOTES WHICH OTHERWISE WOULD GO TO PARTIES OF THE EXTREME LEFT.

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